

You Can Take It With You!

(Or: Everything You've Always Wanted To Know About What Happens When We Die)

All your life, you have heard the saying, "You can't take it with you." Obviously, as this old saying goes, we leave everything behind when we go to our graves—all our money, property, mementos, bric-a-brac, family albums, and treasured personal possessions. But, believe it or not, even though we eventually return to the ground from which we came, we *can* take with us our most precious possessions of all! In this encouraging, inspiring series, you will find answers to perplexing questions: "What if my spouse was not saved when he died?" "What about my father, who, though not a church-going man, was a good man, honest, and a good husband?" "What about our little girl, who was only two when she died?" "What about our son who was killed in Vietnam? He wasn't religious, but he was a good boy. Is he in hell? What happened to him when he died?"

"There is nothing surer than death and taxes." We've all heard it. But, since the Bible speaks often of a resurrection from the dead, do we take anything with us to the grave? Do we bring anything back with us in the resurrection? Will we recognize our loved ones? If so, will we have our memories intact? And what about the bad memories? What about character, integrity, and knowledge?

When Job learned of the tragedies that had destroyed his family, his herds, and his home, he said: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Eternal gave, and the Eternal hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Eternal" (Job 1:21),

Like families of whom we hear in the news, in Homestead, Florida, or in California, or in the Midwest, who have lost everything to hurricane, fire, flood, mudslide, or tornado, Job was devastated. His children were dead. His cattle were dead. His home was destroyed.

Faced with this monumental tragedy, he could only contemplate the somber fact that all physical and material things are left behind when we die. He had nothing left. But then, he couldn't take it with him when it was his turn to be buried.

We've all heard it. We have all said it at one time or another. "You can't take it with you."

Solomon knew that merely piling up material goods was evil, that hoarding money was wrong. He said: "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that labored for the wind?" (Ecclesiastes 5:13-16).

The word *wind* in the book of Ecclesiastes is nearly always rendered "vanity." It is a book about vanity; about empty, useless agendas; about false hopes, wrong goals, and a "pursuit after wind." Solomon, too, knew we take nothing material with us to the grave.

Anciently, pagan kings and pharaohs were unwilling to believe these biblical philosophies. They not only thought they could take everything with them into the next life, they struggled all their lives, making life insufferable for thousands around them, to amass a gigantic fortune to accompany them in death, and, presumably, to provide them comforts in their expected life beyond the grave.

The largest monuments on earth are mute testimony to the attempt by the rulers of Egypt to "take it with them" when they died. The pyramids are tombs. With carefully concealed entryways, and mazes of passages, and with myths, lies, and curses, the pharaohs hoped to thwart would-be grave robbers.

Of course, they failed.

Today, like the touring display of King Tutakamen's golden treasures, their former wealth either ended up in national museums or were sold in bits and pieces on the black market. Their mummified bodies are, like their fabulous wealth, on display to the public.

In ancient China, rulers were sometimes buried in huge crypts, accompanied by dozens of wooden carved warriors on wooden horses, with gold, silver, jewelry, silks, arms, and exquisite works of art alongside them. Sometimes, loyal servants, wives, and bodyguards were either required to commit suicide or were put to

death to accompany their ruler into the underworld. Not only did they think they could take material wealth with them, they thought they could take their friends, guards, and family.

But people in the modern Christian-professing world know better, so they are buried in their best (or favorite) suit, or dress. No wallet. No money, No personal possessions. For many, it is the only time they will ever ride in a limousine, and a very rare occasion, indeed, to wear their best suit and tie.

Every Human Dies, But Will be Resurrected

The Bible insists there is coming a time when God will raise the dead. When the dead are raised, what will they be like? Will they appear as they did in life?

God says He will raise *all* of the dead, no matter into which category, spiritually, they may have belonged.

Your Bible says: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). As God told Adam: “Dust thou art, and unto dust [soil, the elements of this physical earth; the ground, from which we came] shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). God had warned Adam that in the day he rebelled against God’s commandment, he would surely incur the punishment for sin, which is *death*.

Notice: “For the wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Here are two opposites. Death, and eternal life. Man has no inherent eternal life. We are mortal, physical, temporal. God says: “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them [their memory—their consciousness] is forgotten” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

The opposite of death is eternal life.

Your Bible says eternal life is only available “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We do *not* have a so-called “immortal soul” dwelling within us from conception, or birth.

Eternal life is only possible by the process of spiritual salvation; through

repentance of sin, baptism, and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, which begets us as His children, called "new creatures in Christ."

We do not have eternal life by virtue of human birth. We are not immortal. Paul wrote: "Thou shalt keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ... Who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach..." (1 Timothy 6:14-16).

Yet, all your life, you have been taught the myth that man has an *immortal soul* from birth. You have been taught that the unsaved immediately go to an "ever-burning hellfire," there to shriek, scream, and writhe in unimaginable agony of fire day after day, month after month, year after year—thousands of lifetimes with never a respite!

All this, so goes the myth, simply because they were born in China, or India, or Bangladesh, or Pakistan, and *never heard the name of Jesus Christ!*

Is this true? Will God torture for countless billions of years human beings who never had a chance to be saved?

At the very foundational bedrock of biblical understanding is the knowledge of *what is man*. Are we an "immortal soul," dwelling in a temporary physical body? Though our bodies die, do our "souls" go immediately to heaven, or to an ever-burning hell, or to various stages or compartments in "purgatory"?

You will see how the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which is the *only* word translated "soul" into the English Old Testament, may be used in more than a dozen different ways. You will see the word applied to *dead bodies*, to clams, lobsters, whales, or skunks! You will see how the word is used five *times* in the book of Genesis to indicate lower *life forms* in the oceans before it is ever used of man.

No, a loving God does not torture human beings who never had a chance for salvation. The billions who have lived and died without having heard the name of Jesus Christ are not shrieking in hell. God is *love*, not hate. He is *merciful*, not vindictive. He desires to *save*, *not* destroy.

So remember, every human being who has ever lived, and who has died, or is yet to die, will be RESURRECTED at some point in time. The first death that occurs to all humans is "natural," because of the human aging process our short, human life

spans. That first death, *no matter how it comes*, whether in a murder, or tragic accident, or peacefully, under sedation at age 90, is *not* the “wages of sin.”

Now, let’s understand. Believe it or not, your Bible shows there will ultimately be *three different resurrections!*

The First Resurrection

Christ said: “Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [Greek, “judgment”]” (John 5:25-29).

Here, Jesus speaks of two categories of people; those who have done good, and those who have done evil. Two different resurrections, for different purposes. One, a resurrection “of life,” and the other, a resurrection “of judgment.”

The resurrection of life is spoken of in great detail in the New Testament. Notice how Paul puts it: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:19,20).

The foundational bedrock of the Christian faith is the fact of Christ’s resurrection.

The disciples were, at first, unwilling witnesses. They did not at first *believe* Jesus had truly been resurrected, that He was *alive* again! Only after many miraculous occurrences—materializing among them in a closed room, appearing to them along a lonely roadway, appearing to them on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, forcing Thomas to put His hand into the nail and spear wounds—did they finally come to *know* that “He is risen.”

The *fact* of Christ’s resurrection was the pivotal centerpiece of the testimony of the disciples. And why not? It was the most astounding, mind-boggling, stupendous event of their lives!

Peter said: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and His sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; He seeing this before spake of the *resurrection of Christ*, that His soul [*Greek: psuche*, meaning “life”] was not left in hell [*Greek: hades*, meaning “the grave”], neither His flesh did see corruption.

“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

“For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:29-36).

The apostles of Christ had not “studied,” or proved” to themselves out of a set of “proof texts” that Christ was alive. They had *seen Him*. They didn’t merely “believe,” they KNEW. There is a difference.

Because they knew, they preached, powerfully, of the resurrection.

When they were being examined by the rulers, elders, and the scribes because of an astounding healing of a well-known crippled beggar at one of the city gates, Peter spoke up: “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole: Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God *raised from the dead*, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:8-12).

Salvation is only through Jesus Christ of Nazareth; only through *repentance* (Acts 2:38), baptism (Romans 6), and the receiving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Then, when a person who is saved dies, he awaits the *first resurrection* from the dead, which takes place at the moment of Christ’s return.

Notice that Jesus spoke only of two categories of people, those who were being saved, and those who had not yet been judged, who were unsaved. But Christ Himself, and the Scriptures, speak of *another category* of people—those who have had an opportunity for salvation, and have consciously rejected it. They are called the “incorrigibly wicked,” and are characterized by the rich man of Luke 16, in the parable about Lazarus and the rich man.

Notice the clear statements of Paul concerning the first resurrection: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order [there is a sequence of events, a chronological *order* of events concerning the resurrections]: Christ the firstfruits; *afterward* they that are Christ’s *at His coming*” (1 Corinthians 15:22,23).

Many details are given concerning this first great resurrection of the “dead in Christ.” Jesus said: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars [meteorites] shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds [these are living human beings, Christians who are engaged in accomplishing the work of God on this earth], from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29-31).

Notice a corroborating scripture: “For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which also sleep in Jesus [the dead in Christ] will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain [the “elect,” who shall be gathered from all over the world by His angels] unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

He is coming "with clouds," and the dead in Christ are to meet Him "in the air." Look up *air* in any encyclopedia. You will find it is the material mantle of gaseous substances, such as hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, ozone, and many other gases which make up our earth's atmosphere.

By way of comparison, if you have a small desk-sized globe of the world, the transparent lacquer finish on your globe is thicker than the actual mantle of air that surrounds our world.

Jesus is coming back to this earth.

The living saints are *not* taken to heaven at His coming, nor are the "dead in Christ" taken to heaven at His coming. He is *coming again*, not awaiting, in heaven, the arrival of souls, or of saints.

Notice: "Behold the *Day of the Lord* cometh ... I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ... Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations [see Revelation 19:11-21], as when He fought in the day of battle: And *His feet shall stand* IN THAT DAY [the "Day of the Lord," or the time of God's intervention on earth; the time of the conclusion of the Battle of Armageddon; the time of the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!] upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east ... And the Lord shall be king over all the *earth*: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zechariah 14:1-9).

Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth to rule it with a rod of iron (Isaiah 2:2-4; Isaiah 11:4-16; Revelation 2:26, 3:21; Micah 4). When His startled disciples watched Him depart this earth, as He was literally being taken up into the air, and disappearing into the clouds overhead, the very first message to ever come down to this earth after Jesus went to heaven was: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing in up into heaven? This *same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall *SO COME IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO* into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

He is coming with clouds, into the lower atmosphere of this earth, and will continue His descent until He stands upon the Mount of Olives. Not only are the "dead in Christ" resurrected at the moment of Christ's return, but the *living* saints are miraculously *changed*.

Notice how Paul, in the famous “resurrection chapter” of the Bible, puts it: “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [die] but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump* (at the exact moment of Christ’s return), for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we *shall be changed*” (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

So at the very moment Jesus Christ arrives on this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, the “dead in Christ” are resurrected, caught up into the clouds, and are transported by Christ’s angels to meet the returning Christ in the air.

At the very same moment, those *living* saints in whom the Spirit of God dwells will be *changed* from mortal to immortal; from flesh to spirit; from human to divine, and will likewise be caught up into the air, to meet the descending Christ over the Mount of Olives.

His feet will stand in that very day on the Mount of Olives, a short walk from Jerusalem! With Him will be all the great men and women of the Bible, from Seth to Noah; from Moses to Elijah; from John the Baptist to Paul. Also with Him will be millions of people you and I have never known—people who lived their Christian lives in the valleys of Europe during the Middle Ages; people who were persecuted, Perhaps put to death, for their faith in Christ.

Such is the Bible description of the first great resurrection. Now, we know *who* is resurrected when Christ returns. We know the living saints will be *changed* in the batting of an eyelash, and that they will not precede the dead in Christ, but that all will be caught up at the same time, the time of the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, and the Second Coming of Christ.

But what of the *second* resurrection of which Christ spoke. What of those who have *never had an opportunity* for salvation, who have never heard the gospel, never had a chance to either believe it, or reject it?

After all, the vast bulk of the world’s population falls into this category. Christ said there would come a resurrection of “judgment.”

The Second Great Resurrection

Jesus Christ may well have spoken a word in the Aramaic language which would have been translated, “they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of

judgment.” The word in John 5:29 is *krisis* in the Greek language, and means “a *decision* for or against; a *tribunal*, justice, accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment.”

His statement could easily have included *both* the “second resurrection” to judgment and the third resurrection to destruction, of which you will shortly read, but primarily indicated the *second* resurrection, which will be the greatest resurrection of the dead in all history, a resurrection for the purpose of “judgment.”

What is judgment?

First, remember that a judgment is *not a sentencing*! In a trial, there is the trial phase, or the “judgment” phase, and then, if a person is found guilty, a “sentencing.” Many people confuse the two.

Millions have assumed all their lives that in the “judgment” day, it is as if God, on a great throne, has gathered before Him countless millions of people. As each fearful, apprehensive person approaches His throne, angels are thumbing through “books,” which supposedly contain a terrible record of every dirty, rotten, shameful thing the trembling person has done. A written record is there, proving what a terrible sinner or, in some cases, a good Christian, this person has been. Often as not, as this favored myth goes, God slams a gavel down on His desk, and a huge hole opens up beneath the feet of the unfortunate wretch who has just had all His dirty linen exposed before God and Christ, millions of angels, and the millions of people waiting their turn,

With a terrible shriek, the convicted sinner plunges down to hell! Then, perhaps the next person is told: “You get to go to heaven!”

How many stories are there about “Saint Peter and the pearly gates”? With a resounding “whoosh!” up he goes. But why go to “heaven” when apparently God is right there before him? Obviously, those who concocted this mythological scene forgot a few important details.

But all this is pure myth—superstition mixed with some of grandma’s applesauce.

The *judgment* of which the Bible speaks takes place over a *lifetime*, not in a few seconds.

You and I are said to be *under judgment* right now. Each day we are *judged* by our innermost thoughts, our actions, and our words.

How are we being judged?

Peter wrote: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God [the church Jesus built]: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17,18).

We are judged by the words of God's revelation to mankind, the Bible. The word *Bible* comes from the Greek *biblios*. It means "books." Standing by itself, the word *Bible* connotes nothing holy or sacred. Only when we say "Holy Bible" are we truly referring to the sacred Scriptures. God's Word is like a sharp, two-edged sword that discerns even the intent and innermost thought of the human heart (Hebrews 4:12), It is God's Word which judges us.

The word judgment is used many times in God's Word to connote "fairness" and "equity," as well as "discernment" between right and wrong. Notice some examples: "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually" (Hosea 12:6).

The term is used both positively, as in discernment and fairness, and negatively, when men pervert judgment. Amos wrote: "Seek the Eternal, and ye shall live; lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel. Ye who turn judgment to wormwood [a bitter thing], and leave off righteousness in the earth ... for I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right ... seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Eternal, the God of hosts, shall be with You, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate [among the elders; the officials, the courts]: it may be that the Eternal God will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 6-15; excerpts).

Now, *when* will this greatest resurrection in all of history; the resurrection to *judgment*, or discernment, or trial, occur?

Notice how John described the glorious first resurrection, and then immediately described the *second* great general resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he that hath

part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

Christ said, at His last supper: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations, And I appoint unto you a *kingdom*, as MY Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,(Luke 22:28-30).

Then, John said: "But the REST OF THE DEAD lived *not again until the thousand years were finished...*" (Revelation 20:5). As we have seen from many, many scriptures, the first resurrection takes place at the precise instant of the Second Coming of Christ. At that event, the living saints are *changed* in a "moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and caught up together with the "dead in Christ" who are resurrected to meet the descending Christ in the air.

In that same day, they all descend to the Mount of Olives. Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom, and rule this world with a rod of iron for one thousand years. Read Revelation 5:10; 2:26; and 3:21.

But the "rest of the dead," including all the billions of human beings who *never so much as heard the name* of Jesus Christ, "lived *not* again until the thousand years were finished."

For one thousand years, *peace*, prosperity, happiness, and joy will have reigned on earth. Satan will have been hurled far away from the earth, into a symbolic "bottomless pit."

This great event is pictured by the typology of the "Day of Atonement." Anciently, a "fit man" was selected to take a "rough goat," over which all the sins of Israel had been placed, into a vast wilderness—so far away the goat would never find its way back to civilization (see Leviticus 16:20-22; 23:27-32).

John wrote: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more *till the thousand years should be fulfilled*: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3).

As we have read, it is at the end of the millennial reign of Christ and the saints (who are born into the God Family at the first resurrection) when the “rest of the dead” are to come forth from their graves.

These are the unsaved, the countless hundreds of millions and *billions* of human beings who lived in places like Irkutsk, Afghanistan, Niger, Rwanda, India, China, Japan; who lived from the time before the Flood of Noah until the time of the Battle of Armageddon. They are the Huns, the Magyars, the Celts, the Mayans, Aztecs, Incas, and the Toltecs. They are the ancient tribes of Africa, and the Vikings of Norway and Iceland.

Notice the biblical picture: “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great [the masses, peasants and farmers, together with the rich, kings and emperors] stand before God: and the books [Greek: *biblios*] were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were *judged* [remember, being “judged” is *not being sentenced!*] *out of those things which were written in the books* [Greek: *biblios*], according to their works” (Revelation 20:11,12).

Your God is consistent. He says He *does not change* (Malachi 3:6). The Bible says: “Jesus Christ, the *same*, yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

How is God judging His own people today?

He is judging them according to the *Bible*, which merely means “books.” It is the “books” of divine writ, the *Holy Scriptures*, which judge us. God tells us we are *being judged daily* from the pages of His Holy Word!

God is not going to judge *differently*, following the Millennium. He does not change. He is the *same*.

These countless millions of unsaved, ignorant, oftentimes savage people, who were in the most primitive, darkened state of Satan-inspired idolatry, are going to *learn* about God; they are going to learn in the *same way you are learning*, by hearing about, reading, studying, and being taught from the *Word of God!*

Millions of them lived during a time when *human sacrifice* to pagan gods was carried out! They are going to be *re-educated*, brought to a perfect knowledge of

God and His purpose for mankind. They will have plenty of *time* to learn about God and His way of life.

Notice: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy” (Isaiah 65:17,18).

Clearly, this scripture tells us that memories of the old world, the sin-sick, crime-ridden, disease-infested, war-torn world in which you and I live today, “shall not be remembered, nor come to mind.” If this is literal, and not merely metaphor, it indicates God will obliterate bad memories.

Though the following scriptures refer to a period of time called the “Great White Throne Judgment,” they give us a pattern God will use concerning the lifespan of humans in the Millennium—the amount of time available for people to learn, and to practice, God’s way of life.

“There shall be no more thence an infant of days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed” (Isaiah 65:20).

More on this one-hundred-year period later. For now, notice that God has decreed that *after one hundred years*, if a person is still unrepentant, still unyielding to God’s laws, still stiff-necked and hardhearted, and living in sin, he will be “accursed,” which means *condemned*. This truly IS a “sentencing”!

He is *judged* from God’s Word during a one-hundred-year lifetime. If he or she is still refusing to obey God, to repent and be saved at the end of this time, a *sentence* is handed down. The sentence is *death* (Romans 6:23).

Notice it: “For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Eternal of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1).

Jesus said, in explaining the parable of the wheat and the tares to His disciples: “The field is the world [notice, it is *not* the church!]: the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares [a weed, sometimes called “cheat wheat”]

are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:38-43).

Christ spoke of *Gehenna fire*. The term comes from a valley just outside the old city of Jerusalem, which served, anciently, as a town dump. Originally owned by the family of "Hinnom," or "Gehenna," as some scholars believe, this narrow valley was a place of "perpetual fires." Today, such practices are extremely rare in modern, developed countries. The stench from constantly smoldering refuse, garbage, and the like is intolerable.

But over two thousand years ago, just such fires continually burned in the piles of refuse, garbage, and discarded material in the valley of Hinnom. Some have proposed that, in the case of convicted criminals who had committed some great crimes and had been adjudged unworthy of decent burial, after being put to death by stoning, their battered bodies would be thrown into the perpetual fires of Hinnom.

Jesus used this noxious place as a *type*, or an example, of the dreaded "Gehenna fire" which shall destroy the incorrigibly wicked. Read Matthew 13:49,50.

Jesus used two different words which are translated "hell" into the English language. The most common word is *hades* in the Greek, and this word has nothing to do whatsoever with fires, or heat, or burning. It means, simply, "the grave."

Here is the proof. Notice what Jesus said about Capernaum, which had haughtily rejected His teachings; "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [Greek: *hades*]: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matthew 11:23,24).

Briefly, the word *hell* in English comes from an old Nordic name for a false, pagan

god, deriving from their superstitions about the “underworld of the dead.” It was *hel, or behelian*, As late as the 1930s many American farmers still spoke of placing their potatoes in “hell” after harvesting. “Hell” merely meant a dark hole in the ground. It is the erroneous word used for the Greek word *hades* which *should* have always been translated “the grave.”

But Jesus also spoke of *a real* “hellfire,” which He called “Gehenna”!

Notice: “And if your right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Gehenna” (Matthew 5:29). Here, I left the *untranslated* original word Christ used in place. The English-language Bible says “hell.” But Christ’s audience knew immediately what He meant. He referred to the noxious garbage dump outside Jerusalem, with its fires which consumed trash as well as an occasional body of an animal, or a criminal.

As an aside, it is important to note that Christ spoke by way of *analogy*, or in metaphor, and not literally. How do we know this? Simply by comparing scripture with scripture; by allowing the Word of God to interpret itself, without attempting to put our own meaning into it.

Since our bodies are the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” (Romans 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20), and the Bible absolutely forbids disfiguring or maiming our bodies, it is clear Jesus meant something else.

Obviously, He was showing how some human appetites, some desires, some passions, are as difficult to overcome, are such a *part of* some people, that rejecting them is like “pulling eye teeth,” or gouging out an eye, or cutting off a hand.

It is also obvious that if a kleptomaniac (a compulsive thief) cut off his hand, he could still steal with the other hand; obvious that, if a person committed sins with the eye, he could still commit the same sins with the other eye.

The most important point to be made is that Jesus Christ said those who fail to *overcome sin* by the power of God, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, will be cast into *Gehenna fire*, there to be “burnt up,” completely *destroyed*.

Notice the remainder of the passage you read in Malachi: “And ye shall tread

down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 4:3). Gehenna fire *consumes* the bodies of unrepentant sinners, They do not burn forever.

A One Hundred Year Lifespan

Clearly, God shows us through Isaiah’s 65th chapter that He will grant a *one hundred year lifespan* to human beings during the Great White Throne Judgment period, following the Millennium.

There is simply no other way to understand the verses we read. Notice it again: “There shall be no more thence an *infant of days*, nor an old man that hath not filled His days...” (Isaiah 65:20). This reveals a very important and essential truth. Many scriptures show that during the Millennium the human family will continue to marry and bear children. Many scriptures portray the happy, glorious Kingdom of God, in which families and children are present (see Isaiah 11:4-9; Ezekiel 37:24-26; Zechariah 8:5).

However, during this one-hundred-year period, those who are resurrected as infants, and all the little children born during the last months of the Millennium who have not yet matured, will be the *last* generation of the human family.

From the moment of the beginning of the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11,12), no more babies are conceived or born.

“There shall be no more thence [there—during this period] an *infant of days*...” no more one-day-old, or two-week-old babies.

Also, there will be no elderly of mid-seventies, or in their eighties, who die. There will not be an “old man that hath not filled his days”, meaning lived to be one hundred.

Notice the rest of this important scripture: “For the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed” (Isaiah 65:20).

Obviously, these are two different categories. The child who dies at age one hundred is not classified as a “sinner,” so the logical assumption is that the little infant who began to live at the beginning of this one-hundred-year period of

judgment, and who arrives at his one hundredth birthday, simply dies of old age. Then what happens?

One of two possibilities, both completely substantiated in scripture; both already set as *precedents* by God Himself. One, he is either allowed to die the first physical death (for it is “appointed to men once to die”) and then is instantly *resurrected* from the dead; or, two, he is *changed* from flesh to spirit, from human to divine, in an instant, in the “twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:50-52) at the moment of the completion of the one-hundred-year judgment period.

Of course, none of this really concerns you and me, except as a matter of information, a desire to satisfy curiosity about “what happens to other people,” or to our loved ones.

And that curiosity, that concern for loved ones, is what we must now come to understand.

Millions have been left in fear and worry over the fate of beloved family members. They have been *deceived* by the false teachings of the “immortality of the soul” and the “ever-burning hell,” or by vague, musty old concepts of “purgatory.”

I was once asked by a neighbor of mine, not a member of God’s church, about his father. He described his dad as a very “good and decent” man. His dad had worked all his life for the U.S. Postal Service. He had been a good father, a provider for his family of four. He had been faithful to his wife, and had not been a gambler, or a drunkard. His main passion in life, after his early shift delivering mail, was to simply go to one of his favorite lakes and fish.

“But what happened to him when he died?” my neighbor asked. “I know he was not a Christian. He almost never went to church except when my mother would beg him to on a special occasion. But he didn’t cuss, or drink, or smoke, or anything like that. So, since he wasn’t ‘saved,’ as they say, but yet he was a ‘good man,’ did he go to hell?”

Literally millions of puzzled relatives have wondered about such things. And in the answer to these precise questions is some of the very *best news you could ever hear!*

To understand, you need to know what your Bible says about the state of the dead.

What is it Like to be Dead?

God says: “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: *as the one dieth, so dieth the other*; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:19,20).

God’s Word says men die in the same fashion as cows, horses, dogs, or sheep. Their condition in death is the *same*. They both owe their lives to the oxygen in the air. When they die, they both decay, and return to the soil from which they come.

Are the dead *conscious* in some way?

“For the living know that they shall die; but the dead *know not anything*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them [their memory—their conscious thought] is forgotten” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

David knew this. He knew that man returns to the “dust,” to the elements of the soil, from which we came. He wrote: “What profit is there in my blood, which I go down to the pit [Hebrew: *sheol*, usually translated “hell,” erroneously]? Shall the *dust* praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth?” (Psalm 30:9).

Thus, your Bible shows that when humans die, they are no longer conscious. They have no thoughts, no memory, no awareness. The Bible describes death as the deepest kind of sleep—black, stygian *oblivion*—complete unawareness of the passage of time; no pain, no worry, no memory.

Notice: “While I live I will praise the Eternal: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth [he expires], he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:2-4).

It is not the clever catch-phrase of some theologian to refer to death as “sleep.”

God’s Word refers to the dead in Christ as those who “sleep in Jesus” (1

Thessalonians 4:14). Notice some other examples: “For this cause [not discerning the Lord’s body in connection with the Lord’s Supper, or Communion] many are weak and sickly among you, and many *sleep*” (1 Corinthians 11:30).

“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the *dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

The dead know not anything, your Bible says. They have *no memory*. They are characterized as being in the most profound *sleep*, with no conscious thought, no awareness. At the instant of the resurrection, they will once again be thinking, remembering, conscious beings. To them, it will have been as if, from the moment of death to the moment of the resurrection, only a *fraction of a second, the twinkling of an eye*, had passed!

Millions of them will say: “What happened just then?” Millions will not even *know* they were dead, for millions have died so suddenly there was no time for thought, or even pain!

If you have any questions at all about whether the dead are *conscious*, they should have been put to rest by these divinely-revealed truths.

No Immortal Soul!

The Bible does not say that man has an “immortal soul.” For more than four decades, I have offered to my radio and television audiences a certified cashier’s check for \$10,000 if they could show me where the words *immortal soul* or *immortality of the soul* are in the Bible.

Of course, in those forty-two years, no one has ever been able to claim the check, for those connected words, or that phrase, is simply *not in the Scriptures*.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul comes from the concepts of pagan Greek philosophers, and from ancient pagans, who simply did not know God’s truth.

The Bible shows, however, that there is a “spirit in man” (Job 32:8).

The difference between the traditional concept of the immortal soul and the

biblical spirit in man are more than semantic. Those who believe in the so-called immortal soul believe there is *consciousness* after death; the ability to suffer agonies of burning in hell, loss of salvation, horrible realization of one's fate—an alert, thinking, feeling mind!

Just how a “soul” feels *pain*, since pain is the result of the human nervous system connected with the brain, has never been explained. How a soul sees or feels or hears or possesses any of the five senses has never been explained either.

But millions believe the purely *pagan* concept of an immortal soul. To most, the “soul” is merely a spiritual person—sort of like a clone, but a spiritual clone, of the individual. Upon death, this exact replica, complete with the ability to not only feel horrible pain, but to *realize* it with the mind, is said to go directly to “hellfire” if unsaved.

If not quite good enough to be “saved,” but not quite bad enough to burn forever in hellfire, millions believe these souls go to various stages, levels, or compartments of some “place” or other called “purgatory.”

Purgatory Not in the Bible

It is the invention of people who puzzled over the problem created by the belief in the immortal soul, as mentioned above. Since it was inconceivable to them that “good” people who were unsaved should “go to hell,” and equally inconceivable that such “good” people should be able to go to heaven with the “saved,” they felt there must be some halfway house to heaven, some sort of intermediate spiritual ground, where remaining sins, imperfections and the like, could be purged” by some interminable process of time.

Eventually, they invented a “purgatory” for little babies, and another for average people, and another for the “fathers” of the Old Testament who knew nothing of Christ.

But all this is mere invention.

At the basis of every false belief is a false *assumption*, *carelessly* taken for granted. Once the concept of the immortal soul is *given*, then the ideas of purgatory seem logical. Actually, they are more “logical,” given the false basis of the immortality of the soul, than the utterly untenable ideas of the Protestant

churches. But the Bible reveals that man has a *human* spirit, which, once the brain dies, is *no longer conscious* apart from the brain.

The Human Spirit

Look at what God's Word says about we human beings, about the *human spirit* God has given us, which makes us so far superior to animals; which gives us *mind*, conscience, depth of feeling, and character.

David prayed: "Into Thine hand I commit my *spirit*: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Psalm 31:5).

There are two Hebrew words translated "spirit." The most commonly used word is *ruwach*, which means "wind; by resemblance *breath*, i.e. a sensible [or even violent] exhalation; fig. *life, anger, unsubstantiality*; by extens. a *region of the sky*; by resemblance, *spirit*, but only of a rational being [include its expression and functions]:—air, anger, blast, breath, cool, courage, mind, quarter, side, spiritual, vain, whirlwind."

David used an entirely different word in his psalm. It is *neshamah*, pronounced "ne-shawmaw," and means "a puff, i.e. wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, *intellect*, or an animal; blast, breath, inspiration, soul, spirit."

The first word is most commonly translated "soul," but is also rendered "spirit" in many places. It refers, usually, to the animal *life* of man, or the consciousness.

The second word is used more of the *intellect*, or the innermost psyche, and is correctly rendered, "spirit."

Notice another example of *neshamah*, where the word obviously means the innermost consciousness, thought, and intellect of man: "*The spirit of man* is the candle [light] of the Eternal, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Proverbs 20:27). Here, the word has to do *with conscience*; with the human *character*; with deep thought, introspection, meditation, philosophy; with our decision-making ability; accountability.

While man and animal "have all one breath"—that is, the same physical, chemical existence, supported by air, food, and water—they are completely different.

Man has a mind, while animals have *brains*.

Animals are creatures of instinct, but have no power to know or to wonder about their origin, about who, what, and why they are, and what is their destiny.

Animals have limited ability to reason. Experiments with dolphins, poodles, and chimpanzees have proved this. In one experiment, a dog trapped in a basement was observed to pile boxes atop each other until it had a platform high enough to the small window near the ceiling to escape.

But beyond this very limited ability, animals are creatures of automatically-programmed *instinct*. They have no creative ability. They cannot speculate, philosophically, the origin of things.

But God has placed a *spirit* in man—the human spirit. It is this *spiritual essence*, which is linked to the frontal lobes of the human brain and is conscious only when the brain is conscious, that gives man a *mind* as opposed to mere animal brain.

A little colt, only minutes after birth, staggers to its wobbly feet *and immediately* goes directly to the mare's teats to suckle. Somehow, by mere *instinct*, and by sight, sound, and smell, the tiny newborn animal knows exactly what to do.

Baby dolphins are born underwater. *Immediately*, they begin swimming, go to the surface, and take their first breath. Hundreds, no, *thousands* of examples could be cited from birds, fish, insects, and other animals of how *automatically preprogrammed instinct* causes them to survive.

Consider a newly-born human baby.

It is completely helpless. It would lie within inches of its mother's breast and starve to death if it were not cared for by the mother. It is the most helpless of all creatures.

Yet, consider the *potential* of that tiny human brain. Little by little, as the brain is programmed—as the baby bonds to its mother, father, brothers, and sisters—the baby learns.

Animals are capable only of squeaks, yells, barks, whinnys, bawling, calls, and grunts. While many animals, like elk or whales, are very vocal and utilize a wide range of sounds to communicate simple thoughts to each other, such as danger or

feeding, the human mind is capable of learning *language*, with thousands of words, to express *thought*.

Any in-depth study into the human brain is a journey through stupendous, awesome, “mind-boggling data; an introduction to the most incredibly complex organism known to mankind. How we think, reason, deduce, ponder, imagine, and create is almost incomprehensible.

You can know of *nothing* that is superior to your own mind, unless you are willing to admit other minds are better educated than yours, that they have stored more knowledge and experience.

But the human mind is the most incredibly complex thing of which we can come to know by the five physical senses. Could our marvelous minds have come into being by *lesser* intelligence?

Your own intellect demands the answer “No!” Only a vastly Superior Intelligence could have thought out, designed, and then created the human mind and spirit. Now, *think* with that marvelous mind God gave you.

It required two parents to produce you.

Your father’s life, in the form a microscopic spermatozoon, united with your mother’s life, in the form of a fertile egg. At the instant of conception, you and I were much, much smaller than the period at the end of this sentence.

Yet, in that tiniest of beginnings was preprogrammed, in the DNA (for “deoxyribonucleic acid”), the genetic code which determined your sex, general height, weight, and shape; the color of your hair and eyes, color and texture of your skin, shape of your skull, and length of your fingers and toes—the characteristics which would make you “you” during your life. You would inherit, through this miraculous, microscopic beginning, qualities, proclivities, talents, and abilities from your family, including whether or not you are musical or tone deaf, whether you tend to be artistic or mechanical, and so on.

While it has been demonstrated that environment is a powerful shaper of character, the genetic code from your two parents is the most powerful of the two,

We take human life for granted. Yet, when we study into the incredible

reproductive capacity of humans—how, we were conceived, formed in the womb, and born—we are left with a sense of awe and wonder.

David said to God: “I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written [here, knowing nothing about DNA, David is in awe of the developing human fetus], which in continuance were fashioned when there were as yet none of them. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!” (Psalm 139:14-17).

David was no doubt considering all the functions of the human body, contemplating the human eye, the ear, the sense of smell and touch, and the marvelous way in which all his vital organs contributed to his daily experience of living.

He no doubt meditated about the skeletal framework of our bodies, the musculature, with all the tendons, ligaments, and sinew connecting muscle to muscle and muscle to bone. He thought on the marvelous coordination of limb, hands, feet, and torso; how incredible it had been when he had become so proficient with a sling so as to hurl a rounded stone squarely into the forehead of the giant Goliath—the only unprotected place on His body. He no doubt thought of the awesome athletic feats of men in his army, of all the marvels of the human body.

When he said, “which in continuance were fashioned when there were as yet none of them,” he no doubt was pondering the blood flow from mother to fetus; how it could be that, from a microscopic beginning, bone, tissue, muscle, the eye, the ear, the hands, and the feet could form.

David was in awe of God as *Creator*. He recognized the *miracle* that the human body presents to our view; the miracle of human life and reproduction.

It is only through the union between *spirit and brain* that such introspective thoughts are possible! Animals cannot contemplate their origins. Animals do not marvel at their ability to see, or hear. They cannot praise their Maker.

The human spirit is present from the instant of conception!

When did the *Logos* (John 1:1), Who was the “Word,” become the tiny, microscopic zygote which was to become Jesus Christ? *At the instant the Holy Spirit engendered that very Life that was God within the womb of Mary!*

Jesus Christ did not “become Christ” at the moment of *birth*, but *nine long months before* when He was *conceived* by the power of God’s Holy Spirit!

Jeremiah was known of God before His birth! Other examples are contained in Scripture, including Cyrus, the Persian monarch, who was named four *hundred years before he was born*, which absolutely prove that the obscene process of abortion is *murder of a human life!* John the Baptist was conceived by a miraculous intervention from God; was foreordained to His mission prior to His birth! To imagine that aborting John or Jesus would merely have been a “choice” of a young woman is so unthinkably obscene as to defy human rationality.

There was never a moment—not a single second—when the Holy Spirit was not present with Jesus Christ.

Notice how Paul speaks of the human spirit and its connection with the Holy Spirit: “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Greek: “sonship,” meaning more than legal adoption, but meaning actually being the literal offspring], whereby we cry, ‘Abba, [Hebrew word for “Father”], Father.’ The Spirit itself [God’s Holy Spirit] beareth witness with our *spirit* [our human spirit], that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:15-17).

These are vitally important truths—profound scriptures.

Let’s understand what God’s Word is telling us.

Why God is the “Father” of Christians

It was the fertile egg of our mothers and the living spermatozoon of our fathers that “bore witness,” once united together, that we were to become the children of our parents!

Here, God shows us that it is the *living human spirit* connected to our physical

brain, together with the *living, Holy Spirit of God, our Father*, that proves we are *GOD'S CHILDREN!*

The Father is called “the Father” because He *begets children*. He is *reproducing after His own kind!*

Did you notice that brief sentence? Did you think about it?

Creation was not completed in the Garden of Eden, it was only begun.

God, Who is *Elohim* reveals Himself to us through Jesus Christ as *the Father* of us all!

As a marvelous part of the *pattern* of life itself, in all of its forms, God ordained that life begets life, and that life reproduces life of the *same kind!*

All life comes from previously living creatures of the *same kin*. Your human, physical life was only possible because two living, human lives came together in conception. You did not come from one previous life of the same kind, but *two*.

In the same fashion, our heavenly Father *begets* children through the power of His Spirit, linking His Spirit with our living human spirit, so that a new *spirit being* is begotten!

This new “creature” is REAL. It is *alive*. It bears the characteristics of its Father, Who is God, and its *human* life, which is the human spirit inextricably linked to our physical brain.

God does not place His Spirit in mere carnal flesh.

God does not place His Spirit in our kneecaps, or our elbows, or our feet or hands. He places His Spirit in direct union with *our human spirit*, so that spirit life with Spirit life becomes a *new, never-before spirit life!*

Scientists know the human brain is divided into various segments, and that each performs different functions. We are all familiar with the fact that a blow on the head may produce memory loss, yet fail to impair any of the other functions of the brain.

They know that the process of *thought*—the ability of our minds to ponder, philosophize, imagine, wonder, contemplate, create, and decide—is in the frontal

lobes, behind our eyes and forehead,

It is in this portion of our brain that the *character* resides; the ability to feel remorse, sadness, happiness, joy, shame, chagrin, anger, jealousy, lust, greed; the ability to repent, and feel sorrow over wrongdoing; the ability to think, plan, and reason. Our *personality*, aside from our ability to see, hear, walk, and talk, is controlled by these frontal lobes.

God's Holy Spirit does not affect our memory, or improve our athletic ability, or improve our hearing or eyesight. It unites with our human spirit to *change our character, our very deepest and innermost psyche, our personality!*

You and I did not get here by only *one* life, which begat *non-living* tissue! No, it required two lives, united together, to produce our one physical life. So it is with God's process of begetting children.

This should not be puzzling to you, but *plain*.

Now, notice the truth about this "new creature" which is begotten within the human mind. Paul wrote: "For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts [the "heart" spoken of in the Bible always means the *character*; the ability of our minds to think, reason, and to feel remorse; to repent—it does not mean the physical muscular pump that forces the circulation of the bloodstream], to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, But we have this treasure in *earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:6,7).

What is your most precious possession?

We deeply pity those who lost one, or two, or even *all four* limbs through an accident or in war. It is important we understand this, One may say, "I lost my arm." It was my *arm*; it belonged to me. It was part of my body, but it was not me. I am still here. I did not think, plan, reason, feel, or repent with my arm.

A person may say, "I lost both my legs in Vietnam." Perhaps he now moves about on prosthetic legs, and with canes, or crutches. But *he* is still here!

Carried to perhaps an ultimate, ridiculous conclusion, the human body is capable of losing all four limbs, several vital organs, eyesight and hearing capable of being reduced to a piteous trunk of a body *yet the individual is still alive; the*

personality is intact; the conscious, thinking *person* is still there.

I have seen, on television documentaries, piteous quadriplegics who have courageously learned to *paint* by holding a paintbrush between their teeth and moving their heads!

So, understand these biblical passages in the light of your knowledge about who and what we human beings are; in the light of the knowledge of our *human spirit* in connection with our brains which makes us truly human, and not mere animal!

Paul said we have “this TREASURE,” this priceless, precious, wondrous gift of *eternal life, of salvation* in “earthen vessels.” We, our human bodies and minds, are the “earthen vessels.” We are like clay Pots, which *contain* something incalculably precious.

Paul continued: “For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man [the new creature in Christ; a newly-begotten spirit being] is renewed day by day. For our light affliction [tests and trials of life], which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:7-18, excerpted).

The New Creature in Christ Dwells in a Temporary Body

Paul continued: “For we know that if our earthly house of this *tabernacle* were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Notice the language. It is “our earthly house,” but it is not “us.” “We” *dwell* in this “earthly house,” meaning our fragile, temporal human bodies. While our bodies are very much a part of us, they are not “us.” We dwell inside our bodies, in the frontal lobes of our brains. The new creature in Christ is, in a sense, living in the *host* body, our physical “earthly house,” our temporary, physical, chemical existence.

But the “house not made with hands” is a new, *spiritual* body, created of God, to

be inherited at the resurrection, or at the time of the instantaneous change (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

Notice what God says about this new body: "But some man will say, 'How are the dead raised up?' and 'With what body to they come?'" (1 Corinthians 15:35). Here, Paul anticipates many of our questions: "What if someone is buried at sea and eaten of sharks? What about cremation? What if someone is burnt up in a fire? What about those who are disintegrated in explosions or airplane crashes?"

God answers: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened [renewed to life], except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its own body" (1 Corinthians 15:36-38).

Consider a single kernel of corn. When planted in the soil, the tiny germ that contains the microscopic design of the corn plant is fertilized by the decaying endosperm, which is made up of soft starch and hard starch. The germ begins to sprout, feeding on the starchy endosperm. A root appears, then more. Then, a sprout pushes aside the soil, and reaches for the sun. Eventually, the tiny germ grows into a stalk, perhaps as much as eight feet tall, producing two, three, four or more ears of corn. Each ear may have many hundreds of corn kernels.

The single kernel, planted in the soil, has now produced *thousands* of new kernels. These are *new wealth*. They have never existed before, and will never exist again.

In the cycle of life in plants, as in humans, each new living thing is *new wealth* from the soil—a first time ever, never to be again, living entity.

As the glorious eight-foot tall cornstalk, with perhaps four big yellow ears of corn containing hundreds of kernels each bears little resemblance to the tiny germ in a dying corn kernel, so it is that our decaying (or burnt, or disintegrated) human bodies will be incomparable to the glorious spiritual body which God will give us.

Notice: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one [the glory of the stars and planets], and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is

one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory [in brightness, size, and beauty]. *So also is the resurrection of the dead*" (1 Corinthians 15:35-42).

Obviously, in the Kingdom of God, there will be spiritual beings of *different glory*, different splendor, brightness, and different responsibility.

This fits in exactly with Jesus' parables of the talents and pounds, where each person is given reward according to His own accomplishments. One is given rulership over ten cities, another over five (Luke 19:11-27). See also 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, where a clear distinction is made between salvation, as God's free, loving gift, and "work," which results in various degrees of reward.

This helps us understand the difference between *reward*, which has to do with the degree of overcoming according to our natural individual abilities and God's help through the Holy Spirit, and *salvation*, which is the loving *free gift* of God, and has nothing to do with reward.

Reward is "according to their works," while salvation is *free*, the *gift* of God. As the stars differ, so will newly-born spirit beings differ in splendor and glory, and in degrees of *responsibility*, in God's Kingdom.

God clearly shows that David will be king over all Israel, while each of the twelve apostles (Matthias replacing Judas) will be lesser kings, under David, but judging the twelve tribes.

Paul continues: "It [the human" earthen vessel," or fleshly body] is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

There is simply no question about the dogmatic, plain, obvious assertion of fact in these scriptures! There *is a natural body*; that is you and I, our physical bodies in this life. And there *is a spiritual body*, which is the spirit life, the new creation Of SPIRIT which shall inherit God's Kingdom.

"And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul [*Greek: psuche*, the same as the Hebrew *nephesh*, meaning "creature," or "living being"];

the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening Spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth [physical, mortal, temporary, made of flesh], earth; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (1 Corinthians 15:45-47).

You and I are like carbon copies of our parents. We are fleshly, like them. We bear their characteristics. We are composed of the same materials. We have many of their proclivities, talents, and abilities.

Now, notice! "*And as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly* (verse 48).

Is there any remote doubt in your mind about what you just read? This is plainly telling us we will *be members of God's own Family, that we will "be like Him"!*

John wrote: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear [in the resurrection] *WE SHALL BE LIKE Him* for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Millions suppose that salvation means "souls" wafting up to "heaven." Millions assume we humans, in the resurrection, will be at a level *far below* our Father. Perhaps we will be like an old hound dog, who gazes adoringly up into the eyes of His master, then thumps his tail on the floor as he lolls before the fireplace. We will be, they think, on some level like angels, like spiritual drones or automatons.

No, we will be *born of God*, and we will be "like Him," for we shall "see Him as He is"!

Paul said: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy [we are made in the image of our physical parents], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15:50).

Can anything be plainer?

The *glory*, that we are to inherit, the *spiritual bodies* we are to inherit, will be made in the *image of our spiritual Father*, and we shall be CHANGED!

Notice: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a

mystery; we shall not all sleep [again and again, the Bible characterizes the state of the dead as a deep, profound, consciousness sleep!], but we shall all be *changed*, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

The "corruptible" body is no more. Instead, God gives each one of His children a new, *brilliant, incorruptible, eternal SPIRIT body*.

Peter also spoke of the new "creature in Christ" dwelling in a temporary "booth," or "kiosk," or "tabernacle." He wrote: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet [fitting], as long as *I am in this tabernacle*, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12,13).

Peter knew that he was a new creature in Christ, a begotten son of God, who was only temporarily dwelling in an "earthen vessel," a human, physical body, which he called a *tabernacle*, which means "temporary dwelling place."

He continued: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my *tabernacle*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shown me" (verse 14). Peter knew the time of his martyrdom was approaching, that he would be killed for the sake of Christ. He had *faith*, however, to know that it was only like "putting off a garment," or "putting off a tabernacle" it was not the end. Peter himself would survive, though remaining in a deep, profound "sleep" for an indeterminate period of time.

But since "the dead know not anything," the new creature in Christ, the converted son of God that Peter had become, would be completely unaware of the passage of any time!

When He is resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ, it will be to Peter, as to thousands of others, as if it all happened "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

He concluded, speaking of His approaching death: "Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:15).

Our human bodies are but *temporary* dwelling places, subject to aging, to injury,

sickness, and death. While we are alive in the flesh, we have a “window of opportunity” to *repent* of sin; to become convicted of having broken God’s holy laws; to receive baptism, and the laying on of hands to receive God’s Holy Spirit.

When our human spirit is begotten by God’s Holy Spirit, a “*new creature in Christ*” is begotten. It is REAL. It is as real, as absolute, as certain, as factual as your own human existence!

The Reality of Our Spiritual Life

You are *real*.

How did you get here? By the uniting of your father’s life-giving cells with your mother’s fertile egg. At the instant of conception, You began! Only a second earlier, and you did not exist! Millions of potential brothers and sisters could have been conceived. They were not. They failed. But *you succeeded!* You are the result. You are here because two lives came together to produce your *one life*.

Your parents did not sit down on the couch one day, take out a note pad, and begin drawing up the requirements for a baby.

“Let’s see now,” your father *did not* say, “It should be a boy, and we would like it to have blond hair, blue eyes, and ten fingers and ten toes. Oh yes, and eyes, and ears, and all the vital organs....” Your mother *did not* say, “Oh, I’d rather have a girl—let’s make it a girl.” They *did not* then go to the baby bureau downtown, put in their application, and wait for the stork!

Yet, many deceived persons believe, by a casual *assumption*, that they can inherit the Kingdom of God by just such a nonsensical fashion!

They hear a message about God, about doctrine. Perhaps they come across seeming irrefutable proof that Easter is pagan. So they study, and read, and take notes, and do some research. Little by little, they become *convinced*, through painstaking study and research, that Easter is indeed pagan.

So they then *add that knowledge* to their repertoire of truth, their storehouse of belief. Then, they might, with a great deal of skepticism and begrudging reluctance, study for months to prove to themselves that God’s Ten Commandments have *not been done away*, that *sin is the breaking of God’s*

laws (1 John 3:4), and that repentance is shame and deep remorse over having been a lawbreaker! Then, they add *that* bit of truth to their growing storehouse of knowledge,

Eventually, they have amassed a very impressive amount of biblical knowledge. They know a good bit about biblical history, about prophecy, about doctrine.

Sometimes, especially when they come face to face with the *seventh-day Sabbath*, they become cynical, reluctant, even resentful, of the “new truth” they are learning. Finally, after months, or even years, of “proving” things to themselves, they believe they must accept the things they have learned.

Believe it or not, such people *are no more qualified for the Kingdom of God at that point than Satan the devil!*

What a shocking statement! Why assert such? Simply because, when it comes to the Bible and doctrine, Satan KNOWS IT ALL!

Satan could quote Scripture to you forwards and backwards! Satan *knows* all the doctrinal truths of God! But he is in *rebellion* against God, and will never repent!

You can no more inherit the Kingdom of God by slowly, a step at a time, studying *doctrine* than you could make out a list, go to the “bureau,” and have a baby!

It is only when we *repent* of sin (Acts 2:38), then are *baptized*, and then receive *God’s Holy Spirit* that we become God’s children, begotten of our Spiritual Father, a “new creature in Christ”! Once this “new creature in Christ” is *begotten* within our minds, it is every bit as REAL as *you* were REAL when you were a developing fetus in your mother’s womb!

Just as you were nourished by your mother’s bloodstream, so the “new creature in Christ” must be nourished by the Word of God, by Bible studies, by sermons, by studying and reading, by Christian fellowship, and by overcoming hurtful attitudes and non-Christian thoughts,

We must “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” until the moment when we reach the point of *spiritual rebirth!*

Jesus said: “Ye must be *born again,*” and showed that the new birth

is a *spirit* birth—being changed from flesh to spirit, from human to divine!

The Third Resurrection

So far, we have seen there are *two great categories* of human beings who will be involved in the first and second resurrections.

The first resurrection (Revelation 20:6) is at the moment of Christ's arrival into the clouds above this earth, the moment of Christ's angels catching up the resurrected saints and the living (Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). This is the resurrection to *life*, the resurrection of Christ's saints, including the apostles, Abraham and the patriarchs, and all the converted Christians who have lived and died.

For one thousand years, Christ will reign as KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS on earth, with millions of other members of the God Family reigning with Him (Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 10:5; 20:4; Isaiah 11: entire chapter; Isaiah 2; Micah 4).

The second resurrection is the greatest of all. It occurs *after the one thousand years are finished*, and is the resurrection to *judgment* (Revelation 20:5), when God will allow each individual to live for *one hundred years* (Isaiah 65:20).

Since God does not change, the millions who come up in this great resurrection will be judged "out of the *Biblios*," meaning the Word of God, in the same way God is judging you and me today! God says He "changes not." Therefore, they will be judged out of the revealed Word of God, the Bible, exactly as you and I are being judged.

It is very likely that the vast majority of all these teeming millions will accept God's rulership, believe the truth they will be taught, repent of their sins, and receive salvation!

Does this constitute a "second chance"? Absolutely not! These teeming millions *never heard a single word of the gospel; they never heard* the name of Jesus Christ. Or, at least, they never heard the *true* gospel; never truly had a full chance to understand the truth of God and respond to that truth in repentance.

This will be *their first chance!*

A “chance” for salvation is to *hear the gospel* preached. Being born in a pagan land, then dying in a few days of cholera, when your entire society has never heard the name of Jesus Christ, is not a *chance for* salvation!

Do you have loved ones who died, not being converted? They are dead *now—completely oblivious* to the passing of time. The Bible speaks of them as being a the very deepest sleep—completely unconscious. They are NOT LOST! They are merely *dead!*

God says: “It is given to men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

But there is a *third* category of humans.

They are the *incorrigibly*, wicked. They are the ones who have *consciously rejected* God’s way of life; have *rejected* salvation. They are the ones who *WILL not repent!*

Notice: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk [live] after the flesh [carnally, living a life of hedonism, sensuality] in the lust of uncleanness [such as homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, incest, adultery, sodomy], and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

“Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts [like predatory animals, devoid of human feeling, like mercy, forgiveness, and compassion], made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (2 Peter 9-12).

To “utterly perish” is to be completely *destroyed* by fire! Christ warned: “And fear not them which kill the body [our temporary tabernacle], but are not able to kill the soul [the Greek word is *psuche*, which means *psyche*, or mind; innermost being, where the human spirit resides]: but rather fear Him [God the Father] Which is able to destroy *both soul [psuche]* and body [*soma*] in hell [*Gehenna*, God’s destroying fire]” (Matthew 10:28).

When the life cells that became *you* united in the womb of your mother, what happened to the millions of potential brothers and sisters who *could* have been

conceived? They perished. They died. They were never united with a fertile egg; they never became a “new creature.”

What happens to each human being who refuses his or her “window of opportunity” for salvation? They *perish!* Notice: “For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Eternal of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness (Christ) arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves in the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be *ashes* under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Eternal of hosts” (Malachi 4:1-3).

Now, notice how Peter concluded his statements about the wicked utterly perishing”: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any should perish*, but that all should come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be *burned up*. Seeing then that all these things shall be *dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” (2 Peter 2:9-12).

Many miles beneath our feet, our tectonic plates, with their mountains and valleys, “float” on a vast, seething, white-hot subterranean sea of “magma,” or molten rock.

Several times in the past, God has *submerged* the continents beneath the waters of the earth. River deltas, coral atolls, and ancient seashores demonstrate that the earth experienced not just two continental inundations, but several.

The two of which we can come to know are those mentioned in Genesis 1 and Genesis 6 and 7. When we are ushered upon the scene in ancient history, the earth is completely covered with *water*, stygian black, with the sun blotted out by a Venusian-like atmosphere. God’s first act is to “let there be light,” or, to let the light shine upon the earth for the first time in who knows how many thousands, or

millions, of years.

Then, He says: “Let the dry land appear.” Thus, the continents were raised, with the waters roaring from their surface, gouging out valleys, forming lakes, cutting deep river channels.

But mankind became totally corrupt within about one-sixth of human history, resorting to every perversion, violence, and lawless act. Cannibalism was rampant. Murder was everywhere.

God then destroyed the world with a flood, saving only Noah and His family.

Notice how this ancient flood is used as a *type* of the coming destruction of the world by fire: “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’”

These scoffers argue that all events, such as droughts, famines, wars, earthquakes, and the like are but “cyclical.” They sneer at God’s prophecies; they ridicule His servants. They say it is only a repetitious cycle, that all things continue as they always were.

But God says: “For this they WILLINGLY ARE IGNORANT Of, that by *the word of God* the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the *world that then was* [from Adam to Noah], being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth which are now [in the day in which you and I live] by the same word are kept in store, reserved *unto fire* against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 2:3-7). Notice that these verses precede the ones you read above, concerning the elements melting with fervent heat, and the whole earth being destroyed with fire.

Will God simply submerge the continents beneath the molten magma within the earth? It matters not how He accomplishes it, but, at the *end of the human family on earth*, and at the beginning of the next phase of God’s creation, the remaining incorrigibly wicked those who have WILLED to reject God’s truth, who have WILLFULLY rebelled against His holy laws, who have *refused* to repent—will be *burnt up*.

Notice the famous parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

The parable shows that both Lazarus the poor beggar and the cruel, cold-hearted rich man, who refused to give Lazarus a thin dime, *died*. Lazarus is said to have been “carried by the angels” (as we have read in Matthew 24 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the “dead in Christ” are to be caught up at the same moment as the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are resurrected) into “Abraham’s bosom.” This merely means a “close association with Abraham,” a friendly, warm, intimate contact with this great man, The parable does *not* say “heaven.”

Then, *at the time of the third and final resurrection*, the rich man, having died many years earlier, “in hell [*hades*, meaning “the grave.” This is *not* the Greek word *Gehenna*] he lift up his eyes [he becomes *alive* again, seeing], being in torments [because of what he *sees*, *not* because, just yet, of what *he feels*), and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented’” (Luke 16:19-31).

Without repeating the in-depth analysis of this parable, let’s notice some vitally significant points. First, the parable says both the rich man and Lazarus *died*. This ultimate fact, their deaths, must be understood in the light of all the scriptures we have already read (and dozens more we did not) concerning the state of the dead.

The dead are completely oblivious. Unconscious. The “dead know not anything,” and the dead are characterized by being in the most profound, black, unfeeling sleep. The human brain decays and returns to the dust. The human spirit, which has *no consciousness apart from the brain*, is completely comatose, “asleep.” It is a hard and fast rule of Bible study that a seemingly ambiguous or metaphorical scripture cannot nullify many plain, clear, easily understood scriptures on the same subject.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man does not nullify all the plain scriptures in your Bible about the state of the dead, about the resurrection to judgment, about the ultimate reality of Gehenna fire.

Notice further that Lazarus did *not* “go to heaven” but, once resurrected, he was

taken to the “Abraham’s bosom,” or a close, warm, intimate relationship with Abraham.

The rich man , who *died*, could only “lift up His eyes,” or become *conscious again, in a resurrection*.

Which resurrection?

Obviously, this is not the first resurrection, for the rich man is certainly not one of the “dead in Christ.” Obviously, it is not the *second* resurrection, for the rich man says he is “tormented in this flame.” He sees *imminent destruction*—a horrible DEATH BY FIRE—approaching! Obviously, then, this is the *third and final resurrection*, when the grisly, macabre statement is made, “death and the grave were cast into the lake of fire.”

It is stark terror which causes the rich man’s tongue to cleave to the roof of his mouth. He does not ask Lazarus for a fire engine with powerful hoses: he does not ask for a bucket brigade or casks of water. Instead, he asks only for Lazarus to dip his finger into water to *cool the rich man’s tongue*.

Is it significant that he dare not ask for more?

During Lazarus’ life of privation and suffering, the rich man would no doubt look out of His window as he chewed on sumptuous, gourmet food, seeing Lazarus lying on the ground with open, weeping sores—the dogs licking His wounds. The rich man would not give Lazarus so much as a penny,

Thus, the rich man symbolizes the cruelty of man, the heartlessness of those who abuse orphans, widows, the sick, and the elderly. He symbolizes those who exploit others; those who are miserly, selfish, calloused. He also typifies *the incorrigibly, wicked*—those who remain *unmoved* by human suffering!

Now, see further proof of the *third and final* resurrection.

Notice that *after* we read of the Great White Throne Judgment” (Revelation 20:11,12), we read of another great event: “And death and hell [*hades*, meaning the grave] were cast into the *lake of fire*. This is the *second* death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14,15).

Revelation 20 begins with the *first* resurrection, speaking of the “dead in Christ” and the saints who are instantaneously changed at the Second Coming of Christ. This is the “better” resurrection (Hebrews 11:35); the “firstfruits” of salvation (James 1:18; Revelation 14:4). These are the born-again members of the Family of Divine ELOHIM (Romans 8:15-17; 15:29; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52), who “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4).

This is the “resurrection to life” of which Christ spoke (John 5:29), *the first resurrection*.

But we are then told about the “rest of the dead” who “lived *not again until the thousand years are finished*” (Revelation 20:5). This is the Great White Throne Judgment period of one hundred years, of which we have read, during which all the billions of human beings in all the nations of the world will come up in a great, general resurrection, and be given a glorious opportunity for salvation.

This leaves one category of human beings which have not been dealt with. The incorrigible. The willfully rebellious. Those who have deliberately, consciously rejected God’s truth, His wonderful way of life, His grace, mercy, and salvation. These are characterized by the rich man of the parable of Luke 16. Jude says of them: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (Jude 4-8).

Do those who “creep in unawares” by the flock *know what they are doing*? Do they know they are “creeps”?

Surely.

Notice that these evil, false teachers twist the *grace* of God, which is God’s loving, undeserved *forgiveness*, *His pardon* of our past sins, into “license.” In other words, they deceive God’s people into thinking they have “permission” to *break God’s laws*. The people then assume that if their *leaders* say it, and if a few other members of the church nod their heads and go along with it, that it “must be all right.”

They are those who always believe they should “let God work it out.” This is the

excuse used by German SS guards, who murdered countless Jews in death camps all over Europe. They were only “following orders.” It was not their responsibility. It was the responsibility of their leaders. Surely, if something were wrong, then it was up to their *leaders* to straighten it out.

Today, millions believe God’s perfect, holy, righteous Ten Commandments are *done away*. They advocate, openly, *breaking God’s Sabbath*. They are teaching *licentiousness*, which is “permission to sin”! The Bible is very clear about their ultimate reward. They are indicted as being among those who have *knowingly*, and willfully, rejected God’s laws, when they knew, *better!*

They are resurrected immediately after the Great White Throne Judgment. As we saw, their resurrection is characterized by the ugliest of words, “death and the grave.” When is a grave not a grave? It is not a grave when there is no *body* present. The Greek word *hades* means “grave.” But a grave is merely a hole in the ground unless a dead human body is within.

Now, remember what you read about the Great White Throne Judgment of 100 years duration. There is not to be an infant who has not fulfilled His days of 100 years. A sinner, being 100 years of age, shall be “accursed.” After the Millennium, in the great general resurrection, there will be *no more human reproduction*. God will stop the human reproductive cycle. There will be no more an “infant of days” during this future time.

God will resurrect all human beings who have never heard, or consciously rejected, the gospel, from infants to the very elderly. But there will be no more new births.

But during this period, Satan, who has been hurled far away from the earth in a symbolic “bottomless pit” (Revelation 20:1-3), will be free to influence humanity again.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog [metaphor for the vast, teeming gentile races, and implying the incorrigibly wicked], to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city [Jerusalem]: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived

them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [were cast], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:7-10).

Gehenna Fire and the Lake of Fire

Notice that, in Revelation 20:10, the translators added the word *are* in italics following the word *prophet*, But Jesus Christ had cast the beast and the false prophet, two human beings, into the fire of *Gehenna* immediately after His return, one thousand years previously!

Notice it: “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken [seized, arrested], and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he had deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were *cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*” (Revelation 19:19-20).

This causes their *deaths by fire!* It is possible, however, that their bodies are not immediately consumed. In Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, God uses the prince of Tyre and the king of Babylon as *types*, or representatives, of Satan. The king of Babylon is at once a type of Satan and a type of the *beast*, for he was, anciently, the *first* of the great beasts (meaning Gentile kingdoms ruled by men with predatory, rapacious, carnal minds like animals).

Notice how type blends into antitype, and how we are perhaps given a glimpse into precisely what happens when Christ throws both of these satanic, filthy, posturing, mass murderers into Gehenna fire next to Jerusalem: “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High” says *Satan*, as typified by the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:14).

But, in the next verse, both Satan and the king of Babylon, or the final beast of prophecy, are implied: “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell [Hebrew, *sheol*, the exact same word as *hades* in the Greek, meaning “the grave”], to the *sides of the pit*.

“They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee [gaze intently, squint], saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness [destroyed massive amounts of the earth in war],

and destroyed the cities thereof [probably in nuclear attacks]; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit [the stony sides of the valley of Hinnom?]; as a carcass trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned” (Isaiah 14:16-20).

One is reminded of Benito Mussolini, who was a modern type of the beast of prophecy. In the 1930s, after invading Ethiopia, beginning many public works projects, building freeways, apartment buildings, dams, railways, and marshalling the Italian people into a militaristic state, Mussolini would strut about, jutting out his prominent lower jaw, accepting the adulation and worship of millions.

His appearances on his balcony overlooking a major square in Rome are legendary. Hundreds of thousands would be screaming and shouting, “Il Duce! Il Duce! Il Duce!” as he postured and strutted in his military uniform complete with white cocks’ feathers cascading from his hat.

Then, after Italy betrayed the Germans and formally surrendered—though still mostly occupied by Germans who were fighting a fierce delaying action against advancing American and British troops—Mussolini sought to escape into Switzerland.

He was captured, then executed by partisans.

His body, along with that of his mistress, were hoisted into the air by their feet, and thousands filed by, beating the bodies with sticks, spitting on them, defiling them.

The once proud dictator was so beaten that most of the bones of his body were smashed—his features unrecognizable, the bloating body swinging from a rope.

How quickly the adoring masses become a raging, murderous mob when their once revered leader has dashed their hopes and dreams.

If the scriptures in Isaiah 14 are to be taken literally, after Satan, the antitype, blends back into the King of Babylon, the type, it is possible the bodies of both the

beast and the false prophet will jounce off the rocky sides of the “pit” that is once more to become a burning Gehenna fire during the millennial reign of Christ; that they will come to rest only partially burnt. The “Valley of Hinnom,” as mentioned earlier, was like the “town dump,” where perpetual, smoldering fires fed continually on the daily fuel of trash, garbage, and an occasional dead animal, or criminal denied burial.

The picture of Isaiah 14 indicates that the body of the beast, or the super military dictator who ruled over the ten kings of the beast power (Revelation 17:12-14), will come to rest among the rocks in the “sides of the pit ,” where his partially burnt, broken, bloating body will be visible to those who come to view this once proud, adored (Revelation 13:4) and worshipped man.

Perhaps thousands will file by, saying, “Is *this* the man that made the nations tremble?”

Remember then. that the Gehenna fire into which “death and hell,” or the incorrigibly wicked, are cast—the Gehenna fire into which Satan himself is cast—is the Gehenna fire where the beast and the false prophet were cast over one thousand years earlier!

That Gehenna fire will grow to *absorb the world itself!* We have already read of this final, *worldwide* destruction by fire in 2 Peter, the second chapter.

Clearly, then, Gehenna fire will be continually burning *all during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ!* Why?

Christ’s Righteous Punishments for Crime and Sin in His Kingdom

As Jesus Christ establishes His glorious world rule on this earth, He is joined by perhaps a million or two, who constitute the “dead in Christ” and the living who are “changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” at the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

God’s Word tells us we are to be “co-heirs with Christ,” that we are to be “like Him: for we shall see Him as He is” (Romans 8:17; 1 John 3:2). The “new creature in Christ” of which we read is to be *born of God*, given a *spirit body*, to become a member of God’s own family!

Millions of deceived, professing Christians absolutely *refuse to* believe the plain, easily understood statements of God's Word about the future state of the dead in Christ—the state of being of those who are changed from flesh to spirit in the resurrection.

The Jews accused Jesus Christ of “blasphemy” because He “made Himself equal with God.” To them, such a claim was preposterous.

Yet, your Bible insists that the resurrected saints will be *co-heirs with Christ* that they shall be *like Him, for they will see Him as He is!*

Suppose you are named as a co-heir by a long lost millionaire uncle you never knew you had. His estate is worth 100 million dollars. As a co-heir with another relative, how much do you receive? *Exactly the same amount as your other relative, or 50 million dollars!*

A co-heir *shares equally*. To be “like Him” means exactly what it says. The beautiful “resurrection chapter” of 1 Corinthians 15 shows converted human beings will be changed from flesh to spirit, from corruptible to incorruptible, from human to divine. Millions suppose that salvation entails becoming some lesser being, perhaps slightly above the angelic realm.

The purely fictional fantasies of many professing Christian churches portray vague images of how it will be in the “last days,” or in the “judgment,” or when people allegedly “get to heaven.” They suppose, vaguely, that the sheer joys of “gazing into the Master's face,” of living in “heavenly mansions,” or of playing harps and wafting about heaven on angelic wings will be the reward of the saved.

But your Bible plainly shows that *God Almighty is reproducing after His own kind!* Creation was not completed in Eden, it was only begun. The final, superb masterpiece of God's creation is the re-creation of His own kind, through begetting with His Spirit, growth to become *like Him*, and final *birth* into the spiritual family of God in the resurrection!

All nature shouts this truth at us. The Bible shouts this truth at us. Yet, this glorious, unimaginable reward is scornfully *rejected* by nearly all the professing Christian churches.

Christ is called the “Firstborn of *many, brethren.*” Notice it: “For whom He did

foreknow, He also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of His Son*, that He might be *the firstborn among many brethren*" (Romans 8:29). You were "conformed to the image" of your human parents. One who is "conformed to the image" of God's own Son, Jesus Christ, is one who becomes *exactly like Him*, like a member of the same family!

Do you have brothers or sisters? Are you on the same level with them? Are you members of the same family? Of course!

When all the ancient patriarchs, the prophets, and the righteous men and women of old join the 144,000, the great innumerable multitude (Revelation 7), and all the living saints in the resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ, they will be *born of God!*

Instantaneously, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," (1 Corinthians 15:50-52), the living saints will also be *born of God*. It is vitally important you *understand this*.

Jesus Christ will begin to RULE this world with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:26, 19:15; 20:4). His rule will feature absolute, righteous *justice* for all. Crimes will be *punished* exactly proportionate to the crime, until crime becomes virtually nonexistent during most of the Millennium.

No longer will there be the necessity to preach God's Word, the gospel, as a witness. No longer will people be "invited" by preaching. No longer will the gospel fall on deaf ears, or be spurned and rejected. No, the returning Christ will *force* the nations to obey Him.

Notice an important example: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came up against Jerusalem [in the Battle of Armageddon, just prior to Christ's return] shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the ETERNAL of Hosts, and to *keep the Feast of Tabernacles*" (Zechariah 14:16).

The first great universal edict that Christ and His governing, ruling brothers and sisters of the divine family of *Elohim* will issue is that the nations of the world will *keep God's annual holy days!* And they will *be forced* to obey!

Notice: "And it shall be that, whoso will not come up of all the families of the

earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Eternal of Hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain [if some remain stubborn, even in the face of drought, and lost harvests]; there shall be the *plague* [ravaging disease epidemics!], wherewith the Eternal will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the *punishment* of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations [it matters not which—all nations of the earth are included! that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:18,19).

As an example to others, *thousands will die of starvation and disease* if they refuse to obey the divine, conquering, King of kings and Lord of lords, now ruling from His throne in Jerusalem!

This brings up an interesting question—one you can apply to yourself. Do you keep the Feast of Tabernacles now? Should you be keeping it? Most will answer no. The answer to the next question is already foreordained. Will you be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles during the Millennium?

The answer from your coming King of kings is “Yes! You will!”

With one exception, Those who *willfully reject* God’s laws will simply not be in His kingdom.

God’s Word gives us insight into the structure of God’s government under Christ.

God says David will be the King over all the twelve tribes of Israel. He will be *alive* again, but now *glorified*, as a member of God’s own family! After describing the resurrection of Israel, God says: “And David my servant shall be King over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever; and My servant David shall be their prince for ever” (Ezekiel 37:24,25).

David was a man after God’s own heart. He was a *repenter* when he was convicted of sin (Psalm 51). God promised him a throne which would never fail.

Notice another clear example of David’s future position as king over all Israel

during the Millennium:

“Alas! For that day is great [the tribulation! Daniel 12:1,2; Matthew 24:21], so that none is like it. It is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Eternal of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the Eternal their God, and *David their king*, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jeremiah 30:7-9).

Today, David is “both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us...” (Acts 2:29). He is profoundly *asleep*, completely unaware of the passage of time.

But he will be resurrected, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

Christ also promised His disciples that they would rule over Israel, each on a throne over a specific nation, and each *under David*, who would obviously be king over all: “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye may eat and drink at My table in the kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-30).’

Jesus gave three of His most trusted disciples, James, Peter and John, a *foretaste* of His kingdom in the famous “transfiguration.”

“And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John His brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them....”

The word means His entire physiognomy was *changed*. Suddenly, He did not appear human, but *Godlike*, in divine, glorious splendor!

“His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias [Elijah] talking with Him. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles [booths, kiosks, small, temporary dwelling places]; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And

when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid” (Matthew 17:1-6).

Later, Jesus cautioned them, “Tell *the vision* to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead” (verse 9).

This was a *vision*, not an actual resurrection of Moses and Elijah. The disciples could not have known they were seeing a vision of Moses and Elijah unless they heard their names. There were no photographs or busts of Moses and Elijah about; they had no idea what they looked like hundreds of years before, when they were alive.

Not only were they granted a glimpse into the glorious state of being of the resurrected dead in Christ’s kingdom, they were also treated to an angelic messenger’s voice (it was not the voice of God the Father, for no one has heard His voice at any time [John 5:37]) which so shocked and frightened them that they fell to the ground, and hid their faces.

John, in vision, saw the glorified Christ on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:12-17). Again, His face shone like the sun, and His raiment was white like light, and His eyes were like a flame of fire!

Now, notice the first act of *punishment* Jesus Christ will mete out immediately upon His return to this earth:

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse [Christ], and against His army [angelic hosts]. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:19,20). We covered this passage previously, but not in complete detail.

Now, *who is present* with Christ when He administers capital punishment—death by *fire* to the military dictator and the “man of sin,” the false prophet?

Present with Christ, says your Bible, will be *all the resurrected saints, with all those who were changed instantaneously* at His Second Coming. In that very day, His feet, and all the feet of those who accompany Him will stand upon the Mount

of Olives (Zechariah 14:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

The statement, “the beast was taken,” means he was seized, arrested. This arrest, and casting into Gehenna fire of the beast and false prophet will not be done privately, or in a few seconds of time!

Very likely, it will be a *great, world-known and witnessed event* SEEN by perhaps the whole population of earth!

This will be the *very first example of capital punishment* carried out by the returning, conquering Christ! It will be a *lesson to* archcriminals, an *example to* the depraved, power-mad men who would exploit others for their own lusts. Others will “hear and fear” when they see the terrible punishment these two will receive.

Over and over again, God’s Word shows that God’s righteous judgments demand “life for life, an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Exodus 21:23-25). Today, many a liberal fancies himself (or herself) *more righteous than God Almighty!*

NEVER would these supercilious, posturing, holier-than-thou people stoop to such “barbaric” practices as “descending to the same level” as murderers! Why, to them, it is merely vicious, bloody *revenge* to administer capital punishment to murderers!

One is forced to wonder what some of these people would say if it were *their* daughter who was brutally gang raped and strangled to death, or if *they themselves* had been raped, grievously injured, and their loved ones murdered!

One views in disbelief the rabid liberals parading outside prisons where death sentences are finally carried out (often, after more than a decade of appeals—years and years of life for murderers, reading, gardening, watching television, playing cards, writing letters, or studying for a law degree so they can sue the police who arrested them). Their signs and placards scream against the terrible “brutality” and “injustice” of capital punishment!

Even such ghastly, bloodthirsty, satanic killers as Ted Bundy and Jeffery Dahmer,

or John Gacy in Chicago—killers who left their raped, strangled or stabbed victims in a dozen states. Killers who viciously strangled, then had sex with *dead bodies*, or even practiced dismemberment and *cannibalism*, should be given *LIFE* as a reward for their unspeakably grisly, bestial crimes, according to our proverbial opponents of capital punishment.

But they are NOT more righteous than God the Father or Jesus Christ! They themselves, if they do not *repent* of their vicious, satanic attitude of *judging God* will receive the *death* penalty for their rotten, God-defying attitudes of sin and rebellion!

Whether we like it or not, the very first righteous act Jesus Christ the Savior will carry out upon His return will be *casting two mass murderers*, the beast and the false prophet, into Gehenna fire!

It is quite possible that the newly-ignited “Gehenna Fire” near Christ’s capital city of Jerusalem will *continue to burn* during the entirety of the Millennium. Why? For the purpose of a powerful witness against any who would deliberately *reject God’s government, break God’s laws*, or flagrantly *reject* salvation!

God’s Word shows that capital punishment was carried out by, *the community, by stoning*, so that others would “hear and fear.” The hairshirts of today weepingly argue that the death sentence does not deter crime. That is a lie. It is utter, bovine stupidity. First, the murderer who is put to death will *never kill again!* That certainly *deters* HIM doesn’t it?

Secondly, when potential murderers know, that the penalty for murder is *death*, it makes them “hear and fear.”

As an example, there are more than one and a half *million* potential crimes, such as robbery, burglary, assault, rape, and murder, that *do not occur* because potential victims were armed.

Recent studies in Florida prove that the presence of a gun, sometimes when merely *displayed* to a potential robber or rapist, completely changes his mind. But “crime” statistics do not include *crimes not committed*, Foiled attempts are not news, This shows the *deterrent* value of force.

Since the *very first act* of the returning, conquering Christ will be the act of

carrying out *capital punishment—death by fire* for two mass murderers—it is obvious that He will decree the *same* punishment for any who would *dare* to break His righteous laws, the Ten Commandments.

Visible Deterrent—Visible Evidence

During the millennial reign of Christ, the remaining human population, probably half or more of the present population of the world, will quickly expand.

God says: “Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Eternal is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Eternal shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light [this depicts the establishment of Christ’s kingdom; and reminds us of His command to all nations to come up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14)], and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

“Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces [margin: wealth] of the Gentiles shall come unto thee ... the glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious, The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of the Eternal, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

“Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shall suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Eternal am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob ... violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ... thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Eternal will hasten it in his time” (Isaiah 60, excerpted),

In this beautiful, often poetic chapter, God uses Jerusalem as a type of His people. A time of righteousness, abundance, prosperity, and peace is portrayed. Promises of good health, long life, and a young boy becoming the progenitor of a “thousand” are made.

Notice another beautiful example:

“Thus saith the Eternal, I am returned unto Zion [Zechariah 14:4], and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Eternal of hosts, the holy mountain. Thus saith the Eternal of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof (Zechariah 8:35).

During Christ’s millennial reign, He is assisted by perhaps several *million* brothers and sisters of His own divine family called *Elohim*.

These beautiful passages, portraying peace, happiness, safety, and long life are not *automatically*, the result of His return to earth. Peace will be *enforced*. Obedience will be *demande*d, as we saw, in the case of His command to all the Gentile nations to keep the feast.

How will God’s expanded divine family bring about this wondrous time?

By daily rule over the nations. Christ promised: “He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power *over the nations*: and he shall *rule them* with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father” (Revelation 2:26).

How?

First, by swift, sure, *righteous* punishment for crime and sin!

Notice: “And therefore will the Eternal wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the Eternal is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him, For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: for He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He shall answer thee. And though the Eternal give you the bread of adversity [in the tribulation], and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into

a corner any more, but thine eyes shall *see thy teachers*: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:18-21).

Clearly, when Christ and all His born-again family members are ruling this world, it will be *up close*, PERSONAL.

When one would assay to commit a crime, suddenly *materializing* right near them will be a divine member of God's own family! They will hear a voice, saying "*This is the way! Walk ye in it!*" This means they will be told exactly what it is they are about to do wrong, and exactly what is *right*.

What methods can God use to *teach*?

Why, God has *all power*, so that He can do *anything*. Has God used vivid, *realistic* dreams and visions in the past?

Certainly! He has used dreams so vivid, so real, that the prophets who experienced them thought they were *living* the dream!

In the Millennium, the God family will no doubt use all the tools of God's vast miracle-working power to *teach* people the right way.

Perhaps a person who is thinking about stealing will suddenly find a member of God's family standing right there. A booming voice will say, "Wait! Let's 'consider the end of these things.'" Instantly, as if the would-be criminal were *living* the experience, he would see the individual or family from whom he intended stealing, *working* to produce the income to purchase the object of the would-be criminal's lust.

He would see their labor, their planning, their hopes and dreams. He would see their joy when they had finally, by dint of labor and sacrifice, *earned* the item.

He would see their hurt, bewildered faces when they realized this precious object had been *stolen* from them. He would see them fearful, disappointed, feeling as if they had been personally attacked and violated, because someone had entered their private domain, and stolen something very important.

Then, the scene would shift. The would-be criminal would see God's perfect law which says, "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL!" He would see a reenactment of the

latest *death by fire* in Gehenna, which was carried out recently, *in public*, when one had *refused* to listen to his teacher from God's family.

He would then hear of how "lust, when it hath conceived, brings forth sin," and be reminded that "the wages of sin is death!"

Will such events occur? Possibly. When the would-be thief *repents* of his innermost thoughts, he will be warmly forgiven and received back into his family and community. He will be gently warned, with a smile of encouragement from a member of God's family (probably a former member of *his own family*—maybe his former mother or father?) never to allow such thoughts into his mind again, but to *work*, so he can afford to purchase the thing he had begun to covet.

During the Millennium, there will be no more necessity for slowly teaching, reasoning, arguing, proving various biblical "points of doctrine." There will be no more amateur theologians, or "well-intentioned dragons," with their own self-professed importance, their lengthy charts and graphs, or their laboriously-crafted doctrinal arguments.

Instead, any member of the newly-born God family will have the *Unlimited* ability to utilize visions, dreams, and real-life experiences *to shock* people out of their carnal vanity and *stun* them into awareness of God's truth!

Such a one, now a very member of God's family, could appear at will *in his or her glorified state* to his or her own beloved family members. One might suddenly *change* from that glorified state, right before the startled eyes of their loved ones, into an emaciated, ugly, wasted human, lying near death in a hospital bed, with tubes connected to bags of fluid attached to their beds, and with a tube protruding from their trachea.

One might then say: "This was ME, only a few weeks before I died! I *had repented* of my forty years of smoking two packs of cigarettes a day, and had turned to God! I was studying day and night right there in my hospital bed! I read my Bible, I prayed to God, but it was too *late* for me, physically, and God chose not to heal me! I suffered agonies. I suffered most of all *mentally*, because I knew what it would mean for my wife and children to lose their husband and father: to lose their livelihood! Now, I AM TELLING YOU, PUT THAT CIGARETTE DOWN!"

Do you think *that* kind of teaching, from a member of God's own spiritual family,

would be *effective*?

Then, this member of God's family could once again change, and appear in His or Her *glorified spiritual body*! He or she could say, "But *look at me now!*" Would any further "proof" be needed?

Think about it! The greatest PROOF of the wonders of God's governing family, His kingdom on this earth, will be the members of His family, themselves!

But what if one persists, and a crime or sin is committed?

Then we have biblical *precedents* for the kind of *punishments* Christ's perfect government will exact. For minor infractions, it will be possible for *repentance* to occur and *restitution* to be made, either in the form of goods, cattle, or volunteer work. For major ones, it shall be "an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, smiting for smiting, burning for burning, life for life."

For willful sin and violation of God's laws?

The "wages of sin is *death!*" Violent sinners will be *destroyed in* Gehenna fire! Do we have biblical precedents for Christ's government carrying out capital punishment by Gehenna fire? Of course we do. We have read of how Christ's first act will be to administer capital punishment to the beast and the false prophet!

And what of rewards, and of God's loving mercy and unmerited pardon in the Millennium?

Graduation Day in God's Kingdom

We have seen that the Bible uses a 100-year life span as a *pattern* of God—that each individual will live for one hundred years during the "Great White Throne Judgment." is this *a pattern* God will use during the millennial reign of Christ and God's family? It seems logical. This is not "dogma," or information necessary for your salvation or mine; it really matters not at all to your decision during *this lifetime*, here and now. What you will be doing, and *whether* you will be in God's kingdom is being decided *daily*, as you live your life, NOW.

But there are certain logical *patterns* which God uses which may reveal to us the answers to questions not really detailed in the Bible, but available only through extrapolation. It seems *illogical* that the multitudinous causes for human death

would prevail during the Millennium.

For example, since God's own governing family under Christ will be ruling the world, and since God's promises include *healing the sick*, it is inconceivable that the horrible death toll experienced by mankind today from cancer, emphysema, diabetes, cholera, meningitis, and the like, would continue. It is illogical that people would die in automobile collisions, air crashes, or from murder.

Clearly, God's Word describes the millennial reign of Christ as a time of great *peace*. A time of prosperity, happiness, and good health is pictured. No more disease. No famine. No "natural" calamities such as tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, mudslides, avalanches, or floods.

Since God's family will *prevent* crime by chastising would-be criminals *before* they commit an act of violence, people will not be injured or killed in robberies, assaults, rapes, drive-by shootings, or mass murders.

In the light of the foregoing, it is equally *illogical*, from what we can know about the Millennium, that God would allow a God-fearing, repentant, obedient person to *die from some physical cause*, and then *resurrect* that person. No such second resurrection of the *righteous dead* is depicted anywhere in Scripture.

But again, we have a logical *pattern* from God's Word.

God clearly intends to instantaneously *change* the righteous living at the *moment of Christ's return*. We have read of this great event again and again in this book. Paul wrote: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be *changed*, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [the living] *shall be changed*" (I Corinthians 15:51,52).

It is *logical*, then, that as each righteous person reaches the end of a long, 100-year life span, God will *change* that person from mortal to immortal; from human to divine!

Think what this means, and let your imagination apply it to human circumstances. What will it mean to families whose great-grandparents, who are now, respectively, 135 and 142 years of age (assuming they were 35 and 42 when the Millennium began, and they became converted at that time) have reached the end

of an allotted 100-year life span?

God's ruling, governing family will make it known, naturally, to all loving family members and members of the community, that it is *graduation* day for these humble, obedient, repentant, God-fearing people. Probably, there will be a brief *ceremony*, within the family. Then, *at a divine command*, like a miniature "last trump," they will *be changed* from flesh to spirit, from mortal to immortal, right before the eyes of their loved ones!

Will it happen this way? It seems *logical* that it will, but God, in His perfect wisdom, has not chosen to go into detail about such things in His Word. This is extrapolation from the Scriptures, remember, and not "saving" knowledge, or dogma.

On the one hand, we have biblical examples which strongly indicate there will be somber, reflective ceremony accompanying the *destruction of wicked sinners* during Christ's rule on earth. On the other hand, there seem to be logical patterns in the Scriptures that a joyous, moving *ceremony* will accompany the entry into God's spirit family by those who overcome.

You CAN "Take It With You" When You Die

Finally, consider: What of beloved family members who have died, but who were never privileged to be called into God's truth? What of those who, though "good and decent people," were never truly *converted*

As you learned earlier, we human beings live in an earthly "tabernacle," our physical bodies. But we reside in our *minds*. Our memories are not stored in our kneecaps, or our elbows, but in our *minds*.

The billions of human beings who will be resurrected in the *second* resurrection—those who are the "rest of the dead" who do not come up until *after the Millennium*—are those who *never had a real chance* for salvation.

What constitutes a *chance*?

From many, many scriptures, it is obvious that only those who make a determined, *conscious* decision to *reject* God's way of life, His wondrous love, His

gracious forgiveness—those who *rebel* against His laws, and who willfully spurn His salvation will be destroyed in Gehenna fire.

Jesus showed that the Pharisees and the *majority of the population* of His time *could not* understand because God had not opened their minds and hearts!

Read it! “And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is *not given* ... therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people’s heart is waxed gross; and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13:10-16).

God has deliberately *called* some few from time to time, but He has *not called the masses!* The churches do not understand this. Millions assume some vast “tug o’ war” exists between Christ and Satan, Christ trying desperately to “save the world,” while Satan struggles desperately to keep it “lost.” This is a lie of the devil, and portrays the devil as equally strong, or stronger, than Christ.

Your Bible reveals that the vast majority are blinded; that they are deceived. But a deceived person does not *know* that he or she is deceived. A deceived person can be completely *sincere*. He or she can be honest, loyal, faithful, believing, loving, caring, and sharing! A deceived person can be the *niciest person you ever met!*

As my father was fond of saying, “What you don’t know, you don’t know that you don’t know!”

Now, consider the ramifications of these principles, in the next verse: “For verily I say unto you, That many *prophets and righteous* men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matthew 13:17).

Prophets and righteous men do not burn in Gehenna fire simply because God, in His infinite wisdom, chose *not to reveal His plan of salvation* unto them! Such

men will come up in the great, general “White Throne Judgment” time.

Now, think!

When God resurrects the dead, it will as though they had been dead for only a *split second of time!* So far as they were concerned, they were alive one moment: something happened, perhaps a wreck, or a fall, or a crash, or a bullet! They felt virtually nothing! Then, in a *split second of time* they are *alive again!*

Their memory is intact. Their *character* is intact. The kind of person they were is exactly the kind of person they *still are!*

So you see, your loved ones and mine, who really *never consciously, rejected God and His salvation* will have a wonderful opportunity to repent, and to be saved, in the Great White Throne Judgment!

Don't you believe that a person of *good character* will have a running head start towards receiving God's truth above those who had poor character? Of course!

That is what I mean when I say, “You can take it with you when you die,” meaning *your character!*

In summary, then, we have seen there are THREE resurrections revealed in the Bible. The first is the dead in Christ. The second is the “rest of the dead” who “lived not again until the thousand years were finished,” the dead, in the vast majority, who come up for a one-hundred year period of judgment.

But this leaves one category of human beings not yet resurrected: the incorrigibly wicked! They are typified by the rich man of Luke 16, and called by the grisly phrase “death and the grave.” They come up at the *end of this phase of God's plan* (2 Peter 3:12) when the earth itself is *destroyed by fire.*

Then, God says: Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

What of those “new heavens and new earth”?

God says: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said,

BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!" (Revelation 21:4,5).

Believe it or not, this is the true *BEGINNING* of the great plan of God.

Now, every being on earth is divine. Now, all are finally members of God's great, expanded family!

What then?

Our known universe contains countless *galaxies*, Galaxies can contain hundreds of *billions* of stars! Each star, of which our own sun is but an "orange dwarf as an example, could hold in its gravitational field any number of *planets*.

Why do you suppose God has created all those galaxies, all those suns, all those billions upon billions of planets?

Today, they are lifeless, empty, vain, waste, and chaotic.

So was our planet earth, until the One called *Elohim* said "Let there be light!"

Do you suppose He could ever do it again?

What about those who become "co-heirs with Christ"? Could *they* ever be called upon to go to a distant planet? Your God and mine is *Creator*. He has a great, fathomless *purpose* in all He does.

Perhaps, far from the "end" time, the time of the new heavens and the new earth are but "the beginning."

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